

Who are their favorite Republican candidates? Giuliani? McCain? Romney?

Well, thanks to the first ever National Youth Presidential Forum on November 14, 2007, up to 10 million young people will have the opportunity to hear from the Presidential candidates from both parties and then cast their votes.

As the Congressman from central Florida, I'm very proud that the Lou Frey Institute of Politics and Government at the University of Central Florida is playing a key role in putting together this unprecedented event.

They've joined together with the EWN Foundation, The Presidential Classroom, and the United States Association of Former Members of Congress to sponsor a 3-hour forum online, which brings together Presidential candidates and America's young people for the first time in a unique Webcast.

This is how it will work. Presidential classroom scholars will create questions which will then be sent to the Presidential candidates who can respond via videotape prior to the event or live the day of the event. Then, thanks to the event sponsors, the Webcast will be provided free to each of the participating high schools and colleges across the United States.

All of the students will then be able to vote for up to 36 hours after hearing from each of the candidates on the issues most important to them.

I urge my colleagues to go to www.rocktheweb.org for more information on this great project. It provides a valuable civics lesson for our students and important feedback to our Presidential candidates on the key issues facing America's young people.

I would encourage all of the Presidential candidates, high schools and colleges to participate in this worthwhile educational opportunity.

CAMEL NO. 9 CIGARETTES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mrs. CAPPS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, I rise to discuss an important public health issue, particularly for young women and girls.

As a mother, grandmother and a former school nurse, I know all about the annual back-to-school shopping ritual. Each fall, kids and parents hit the stores to stock up on school supplies and new clothes. Unfortunately, this fall there's a new must-have item being advertised, and believe it or not, it's Camel No. 9 cigarettes.

It's being brought to our daughters, granddaughters and nieces by the folks at R.J. Reynolds, the same company that thought cartoon character Joe Camel was a responsible product spokesman.

Camel No. 9 cigarettes are just the pink version of Joe Camel, or as one Oregon newspaper put it, "Barbie Camel." And R.J. Reynolds' tobacco

marketing strategy is complete with fashionable giveaways to young women that include berry lip balm and mini hot pink purses.

The tag line for Camel No. 9 is "light and luscious," which sounds more like a tasty treat than a cancer-causing cigarette. Now there's even a Camel No. 9 stiletto line which evokes images of the sexy shoes.

Well, I'd like to remind R.J. Reynolds that there's nothing sexy about emphysema or dying prematurely from cancer. No amount of pretty pink packaging can obscure the fact that lung cancer is the number one cancer killer among American women, a truth that underscores big tobacco's desperate search for new smokers.

While we expect this kind of sleazy marketing from tobacco companies, I've been terribly disappointed that they've found a new and unexpected ally in women's fashion magazines. These magazines set the styles and trends for the country. They have historically served as legitimate sources for information on women's health and fitness, and they've sold out the well-being of their readers to help big tobacco in their search for new victims.

So back in June, 40 of my colleagues joined me in writing to the publishers of 11 leading women's magazines. We asked them to voluntarily stop accepting misleading advertising for deadly cigarettes, particularly for Camel No. 9. When not one of these magazines bothered to formally respond to our first letter, we wrote again.

This time seven of them did respond, but none have committed to drop the ads. Several defended themselves by pointing to their editorials on the dangers of smoking, but how can a young impressionable reader possibly take that seriously when they can flip the page and find an advertisement for cigarettes that make them look as sexy and sophisticated as perfume?

Just look at this ad printed in the October edition of "Glamour." This "Dressed to the 9s" piece encourages the "fashion forward" woman to embrace a vintage look and more closely resembles the magazine's regular editorial content on the latest fashions. The ad also helpfully recommends starting a vintage makeover with a little black dress.

Quite frankly, it would be more appropriate to exhibit how it would look with black lungs and yellowed teeth readers would have after a life of smoking.

This sort of deceptive advertising is brilliant in the eyes of marketers but shameful in the eyes of anyone who cares about public health. These ads are obviously targeted to appeal to young women and girls.

And although this magazine may claim that girls and teens are only a small fraction of their readership, I think that everyone can relate to the familiar scene of a young girl in line at the grocery store with her mom, flipping through the magazines that the

cool older girls are reading. This is exactly what they would see in this issue of "Glamour." There's two more pages I don't have time to flip through myself.

Newsweek columnist Anna Quindlen recently wrote on Camel No. 9 cigarettes and this deliberate effort to appeal to young women and girls. In her piece she noted that her own 18-year-old daughter had tried Camel No. 9, describing its taste and smell with words like perfume, caramel, and chai tea.

So R.J. Reynolds and leading women's fashion magazines are pushing pink stiletto cigarettes that smell like perfume, taste like chai on ad pages that are virtually indistinguishable from the regular fashion content of the magazine. Yet, they continue to insist that this ad blitz, timed perfectly to coincide with the start of school, is in no way targeting our children? It would be laughable if it wasn't so serious.

Tomorrow, we're going to be having a hearing on H.R. 1108, introduced by my colleague HENRY WAXMAN, which would give FDA the authority to regulate tobacco, including advertising, and I hope that the magazines that are printing these ads don't wait until Congress passes a law in order to do the right thing.

If the Camel No. 9 advertising blitz that greeted our students at the start of the school year is any indication of their intentions, I shudder to think of the tricks and treats R.J. Reynolds and its new friends in the magazine business have in store for our young women and girls this Halloween.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

LET'S GET SERIOUS ABOUT OUR FISCAL OUTLOOK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, last Tuesday Congressman JIM COOPER and I reintroduced the SAFE Commission Act, and I'm hopeful that by joining efforts our colleagues in the House and the Senate will embrace this bipartisan commission that could put our country on sound financial footing.

U.S. Comptroller General David Walker, the Heritage Foundation, the Brookings Institution, the Concord Coalition and the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget all support the Cooper-Wolf SAFE Commission Act.

These groups also have joined on what they call "The Fiscal Wake-Up Tour," which has been traveling across

America from San Francisco to Cincinnati laying out the facts about the future financial condition of our country, discussing possible options and preparing the way for tough choices that those of us in Congress are going to have to make.

When you look at this tour, you see groups who usually disagree more than they agree on policy issues. That makes it even more extraordinary that they all agree that we need to sit down and work together to make sure our country doesn't fall into a financial canyon that we can never climb out of.

That's the message that is resonating with folks who hear them: the need to come together and work to find bipartisan answers to ensure a secure financial future for America.

What the tour has told us, too, is that we shouldn't underestimate the willingness and ability of the American people to hear the truth and support the decisions necessary to change our financial course, and that's encouraging.

Many of you may recall the Simon and Garfunkel song, "The Boxer," with the refrain, "Man hears what he wants to hear and disregards the rest." The Fiscal Wake-Up Tour offers hope that with education Americans may be more ready than we think to accept the fact that Federal spending cannot continue to balloon without consequences. It is time that we tell the American people what they need to hear and not just what they want to hear. "The Boxer" song, "Man hears what he wants to hear and disregards the rest."

Thirty years from now we won't be arguing in Congress over discretionary spending anymore because there will be no funding left in that category.

I'm not an expert in economics, but simple math tells us that little money will be left to ensure that our highways and bridges are safe, that there will be no money for cancer research and to solve the riddles of Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, that there won't be money to care for veterans.

Resources will be scarce to ensure our schools are the best in the world so that our children and grandchildren can get the necessary tools, particularly in math and science, to compete in the world marketplace.

We owe it to our young people to start the process today. Reining in spending is both an economic and it is a moral issue.

We cannot continue to avoid our responsibility to future generations of Americans by passing on a broken system in the form of unfunded Social Security and Medicare obligations and unsustainable spending.

We cannot continue to borrow and mortgage our future to countries like China, which has a terrible human rights record and has plundered Tibet, and has Catholic bishops in jail and Protestant pastors in jail and others in jail, or the Saudi Arabia that is funding Wahabism around the world, that

they carry obscene amounts of our debt.

But I'm going to be candid. Congress, on its own, unfortunately can't get it done in this politically charged atmosphere of Washington today. The Congress today is dysfunctional. The latest public opinion polls perhaps validate my assessment.

The American people expect us to put our partisan differences aside and to work together to get things done. We must move beyond the politics and come to grips with the fact that the financial future of our country is an American issue. It's not a red issue or blue issue. It's a red, white and blue issue. It's an issue that, as Americans, we should be working together to deal with.

Under the SAFE Commission process, Congress is the ultimate decision-maker obviously, but it will be the SAFE Commission, after holding hearings across the country, listening to the American people and putting everything on the table for discussion, entitlements and tax policies, which will send its recommendations to Congress for a mandatory up-or-down vote, similar to what we do on the base closing commission.

Congress will be the major part in the SAFE process. It will be at the table. We even hold out hope that Congress could find its way and act on its own.

First, at least four of the 14 congressionally appointed commission members must be sitting Members of Congress.

Second, if Congress enacts significant legislation aimed at addressing this looming crisis, the SAFE commission would terminate and cease to exist.

We hope this happens, but, quite frankly, I don't think it will. Abraham Lincoln once said: "You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today."

I believe there is a moral component to this issue that goes to the heart of who we are as Americans. By that I mean have we lost a national will to make the tough decisions.

The SAFE Commission offers us the opportunity to find a way forward to protect our future. Is it right for one generation to live very well knowing that its debts will be left to be paid for by their children and their grandchildren? No, it is not right, but it is immoral.

I'm challenging our colleagues today to come together—to know that while you served in Congress you did everything in your power to provide the kind of security and way of life for your children and grandchildren that your parents and grandparents worked so hard to provide for you.

The challenge, too, goes out to the leadership in Congress and the Administration to make this a truly bipartisan effort and put the SAFE Commission on the fast track to enactment.

How can we lack leadership on such a fundamental issue?

Leadership by definition requires taking initiative—to act before others, to develop fresh approaches.

This issue is timely and critical.

I urge you to review the bipartisan Cooper-Wolf legislation.

□ 1745

IMPROPER OVERSIGHT OF BLACKWATER AND THE PASSAGE OF H.R. 3087 IS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION TO RESPONSIBLY REDEPLOY OUR TROOPS FROM IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, today in the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, my colleagues and I questioned the CEO of Blackwater and lead figures in the Department of State regarding private security contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan.

During the course of this hearing, I was absolutely alarmed and shocked by the stark reality that private contractors such as Blackwater have possibly created a shadow military of mercenary troops that are not accountable to the United States Government or to anyone else.

With 180,000 Americans, Iraqis and nationals from other countries who operate under an array of Federal contracts provide everything from security and intelligence gathering to infrastructure building and transporting supplies to a country nearly the size of California.

Even more alarming is the fact that Blackwater and similar private contractors make up the largest security force in Iraq. There are currently over 20,000 more contractors than the total U.S. military forces.

With these numbers, one may suspect the contractors are being utilized, in part, to mask the true extent of our involvement in Iraq. I am also concerned with the fact that many contractors such as those working for Blackwater are simply held to a different standard, where circumventing criminal law, rules of engagement and even the Geneva Conventions have become far too commonplace.

There have been 195 escalation of force incidents from Blackwater alone since 2005, including several previously unreported killings of Iraqi civilians. In 80 percent of these instances, Blackwater fired first. This "shoot now and ask questions later" attitude has resulted in further distrust amongst Iraqis for American military forces and the Iraqi Interior Ministry demanding that Blackwater cease its operations in Iraq, all during a time when winning the cooperation of Iraqi civilians and government is critical for our success for our mission.

Due to these and other incidents, Blackwater has undermined our strategic mission in Iraq and possibly stifled our already sensitive relationship with Iraq's neighboring states, those